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Recent records of the Sickle-winged Nightjar *Eleothreptus anomalus* in south-east Brazil

by Guy M. Kirwan, Paulo Martuscelli, Luís Fábio Silveira & Robert S. R. Williams

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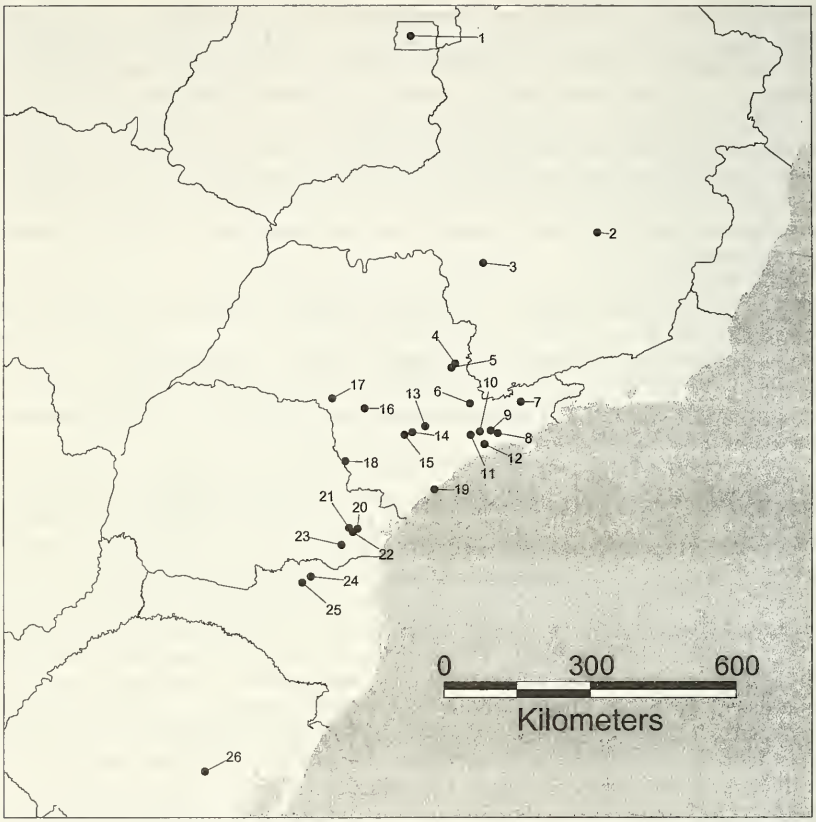
In Brazil, the endangered Sickle-winged Nightjar *Eleothreptus anomalus* is known from 19 traced localities: in Distrito Federal, Minas Gerais and from São Paulo south to central Rio Grande do Sul (Collar *et al.* 1992, Sick 1993). There have been just five records since 1971, the most recent being one found dead in Paraná in 1994 (Bornschein *et al.* 1996), although Bornschein *et al.* (1998) mention that they recorded three birds in a humid field by the rio Iraí, near Curitiba, Paraná, on

20 September 1991. Here, details of ten new records, four from São Paulo and four (all from one site) in Minas Gerais, the latter the first state records since 1847 (Collar *et al.* 1992), are presented. Details of two specimen records, previously unreported in the literature, are also presented. Although all of the records here, with the exception of the two most recent (1998) occurrences in Minas Gerais, were made available to Cleere (1998) we consider them worthy of separate publication and discussion here, as they suggest that the species may be found more readily in south-east Brazil than previously considered.

PM recorded three occurrences in São Paulo state as follows: two well-separated individuals in "campo cerrado", near a marsh at Santa Cruz do Rio Pardo (350 m, 22°53′S, 49°37′W) on 15 July 1995; five well-separated individuals in a humid field at Biritiba-Mirim (900 m, 23°34′S, 46°02′W) on 23 April 1998; and one bird in pasture near a swamp with *Typha* at Tremembé (650 m, 22°57′S, 45°32′W), date not recorded.

At dusk on 4 February 1997, GMK and RSRW, together with David D. Beadle and Rod McCann, found two Sickle-winged Nightjars (possibly a pair) on the dirt road just north of Sete Barras (24°40′S, 47°72′W) and south of Carlos Botelho State Park, São Paulo. The birds were observed with binoculars in car headlights, and showed many of the characteristics described by Pearman & Abadie (1995). Their tiny size and short tail were immediately apparent (although there were no other species available for direct comparison), as was their unusual flight action, being very fluttery and comparatively buoyant. One bird possessed a buffy nuchal collar and pale bases to the outermost, otherwise blackish, primaries. Four other small nightjars in the same area were seen too briefly to facilitate identification. These appear to be only the 4–6th multiple sight records (for a further such record, see below), following those described by Miatello *et al.* (1991), Straneck & Viñas (1994) and Pearman & Abadie (1995) in Entre Ríos, Córdoba and Santiago del Estero, Argentina, and the four São Paulo records are the 19th–22nd state occurrences (from 16 localities).

LFS recorded a female at Serra da Canastra National Park (20°14′S, 46°21′W), Minas Gerais on 22 June 1996 at 1945 h. The bird was photographed on the ground, on the principal (dirt) road through the park. It flew short distances to catch insects, before returning to the road after each flycatching sally. It was in a grassland formation, far from any water course. Another, or perhaps the same bird, was seen in the same place on 22 August 1997. Together with Andrés Bosso and Edson Endrigo, LFS saw a male in a grass field far from any watercourse or marshy areas, at Serra da Canastra on 20 and 22 August 1998, while Heinz Remold and Edwin O. Willis recorded three birds, also in the same dry area of the national park, on 7–8 November 1998. LFS *et al.* heard a female utter a "simple tik" note in flight, apparently different to the "harsh, nasal *gzee gzee* mentioned by Straneck & Viñas (1994) and Cleere (1998). HR *in litt.* (1998) records that the three observed by himself and EOW made "some chirping cricket-like sounds". These are the 2–5th records in Minas Gerais; the only



Localities in Brazil for which records of Sickle-winged Nightjar *Eleothreptus anomalus* are available. 1. Brasília National Park, DF. 2. Lagoa Santa, MG. 3. Serra da Canastra National Park, MG. 4. Orissanga, SP. 5. Rio da Pedras, SP. 6. Tremembé, SP. 7. Mato Dentro, SP. 8. Moji das Cruzes, SP. 9. Goyao, SP. 10. Ipiranga, SP. 11. Biritiba-Mairim, SP. 12. Paranapiacaba, SP. 13. Ipanema, SP. 14. Alambari, SP. 15. Itapetininga, SP. 16. Sete Barras, SP. 17. Fazenda Pedras, SP. 18. Itarare, SP. 19. Santa Cruz do Rio Pardo, SP. 20. Curitiba, PR. 21. Cambuí, PR. 22. Piraquara, PR. 23. Fazenda Santa Rita, PR. 24. Quatro Barras, SC. 25. Rio Novo, SC. 26. Pântano Grande, RGS. Abbreviations: DF=Distrito Federal; MG=Minas Gerais; SP=São Paulo; PR=Paraná; SC=Santa Catarina; RGS=Rio Grande do Sul. Localities 1–2, 4–5, 7–10, 12–15, 17–18, 20–22, and 26 taken from Collar *et al.* (1992); 3, 6, 11, 16 and 19 from this study; 23 from Bornschein *et al.* (1996); and 24–25 from Nigel Cleere *in litt.* (1997). The record, made by Bornschein *et al.* (1998), from Paraná on 20 September 1991, is not mapped as coordinates are unavailable to us, but its inclusion would not alter the species' overall mapped distribution in south-east Brazil.

previous record was in 1847, when two females were collected at Lagoa Santa on 2 August (Collar *et al.* 1992).

These records partially support Pearman & Abadie's (1995) statements concerning the species' habitat preferences. Whereas

previous authors (e.g. Olrog 1984, Sick 1993) had noted an association with marshes, it now appears that the species is more reliant on gallery forest, chaco-type woodland and transitional woodland; a significant number of Argentine records come from areas adjacent to rivers, but rarely lakes or standing-water bodies (Pearman & Abadie 1995). The habitat near Sete Barras was grassland in close proximity to degraded dry woodland and a small river. The other records from new localities from São Paulo also showed some association with water, but those from Serra da Canastra apparently did not. Notably, the area in which the species was observed near Curitiba, by Bornschein *et al.* (1998), consists of humid, wet grassland along streams and rivers, interspersed with housing developments, grazing pasture and plantations (pers. obs.). In addition, there are two specimens, in the Museu Nacional de Rio de Janeiro, which have not previously been mentioned in the literature: singles collected at Rio Novo, Santa Catarina (c. 26°29′S, 50°16′W) on 3 June 1991 and at Quatro Barras, Santa Catarina (c. 25°22′S, 49°05′W) on 20 September 1991 (Nigel Cleere *in litt.* 1997). These are the first state records (do Rosário 1996).

These new sight, and previously unpublished recent specimen, records suggest that *Eleothreptus anomalus* may be somewhat less scarce, and at least as widespread, as formerly presumed in south-east Brazil (Collar *et al.* 1992, Cleere 1998). We do not suggest that its threatened status necessarily requires revision. Nonetheless, observers should clearly be aware of the possibility of finding this species in open, grassland habitats and are encouraged to search actively for it in appropriate areas of the country. The even rarer White-winged Nightjar *Caprimulgus candicans* (which may be congeneric with *Eleothreptus anomalus*, see Cleere 1998) has a broadly similar distribution. *C. candicans* has recently (1997) been rediscovered at Emas National Park, Goías, Brazil, having been unrecorded there since 1990 (Rodrigues *et al.* 1999), and significant numbers have recently been found at Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú, Paraguay (Clay *et al.* 1998). Given that this highly distinctive and attractive species had gone unrecorded for comparatively long periods, even at relatively well-watched localities such as Emas, it would certainly appear worthwhile to re-survey old specimen localities for the less strikingly-plumaged *Eleothreptus* as well, of course, as searching for new sites. From the conflicting evidence available, it appears that *E. anomalus* may occupy a relatively wide range of grassland habitats (see e.g. Cleere 1998), or that a currently intangible common factor links these different environments.

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A westward extension to the known breeding range of Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini* in Siberia

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Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini* breeds across the sub- and high-Arctic of North America and Asia but has a restricted distribution within this biome. Across the Asian continent, for example, it is thought to breed in just six discrete areas and is found along a very small proportion of the continental coastline. Apart from sporadic breeding on Spitsbergen (20°E), where birds may originate from Greenland (Isaaksen & Bakker 1995), the most westerly areas in which they have been found include the northern part of the Taymyr Peninsula (100°E), eastern Taymyr